

Ganga Flood Control Commission is initiating action to convene the meeting of the Ganga Flood Control Board.

- (viii) Inter-state disputes including those on Damodar Valley project would be discussed in the forthcoming inter-state meeting.

Action is being initiated.

- (ix) Bihar Irrigation Commission's report dealing with the availability of water in Ganga at different locations would be examined by Central Water Commission.

These studies are being taken up.

[English]

T-72 Tank

5641. SHRI ADSUL ANANDRAO VITHOBA : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

- (a) whether materials, and machines/plants worth crores of rupees are lying unused for the last three years;

- (b) whether the cost of items which are used in maintenance has been lying unused;

- (c) if so, whether a large number of items costing about 55 crores have been utilised only once in the past three years as also a robotic welding machine as well as the painting plant which cost about 65 lakhs and 1.8 crores respectively has never been put to use;

- (d) if so, whether the Government propose to take steps to put to use these unused materials/machines thereby minimising cost of the T-72 tank; and

- (e) if not the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) to (e) T-72 tanks are produced on regular basis utilising inputs and installed facilities. Some components procured for manufacture of the earlier versions of tanks need to be drawn upon. A committee has been constituted to secure the utilisation of these material worth about Rs. 27 crores which have been in stock for the last 3 years.

Consumables are duly drawn for operations maintenance. Critical items of unforeseen breakdown maintenance require to be held in reserve as an insurance to meet contingencies in accordance with established practice.

Use of the robotic welding machine has been impeded

by variation in characteristics of input materials. Readjustment of the regimes of the machine is under way. The painting plant has been partially utilised and in relation to the load.

Navigational Route via Brahmaputra connecting Calcutta

5642. SHRI NURUL ISLAM : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state :

- (a) whether there has been a navigational route via Brahmaputra river connecting Calcutta with various North East States, more particularly Assam;

- (b) if so, the details thereof; and

- (c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) Yes, Sir.

- (b) Dhubri to Sadiya stretch of 891 Kms. of river Brahmaputra was declared as National Waterway No.2 in September, 1988. For development and maintenance of the fairway, conservancy works like bandalling, channel marking are being taken up on year to year basis. Floating terminals exist at Dhubri, Jogighopa and Pandu. A scheme sanctioned for additional floating terminals at Dhubri, Jogighopa, Tezpur, Neamati and Dibrugarh is under implementation. The waterway with 45 m width and 2 mtr. LAD is being maintained from Dhubri to Neamati. Cargo services between Calcutta and Pandu are run regularly through Inland Water Transport.

- (c) Does not arise.

Ex-Servicemen in Kerala

5643. PROF. P.J. KURIEN : Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state :

- (a) the total number of ex-servicemen in Kerala who have not got any job after retirement from the services; and

- (b) the action being taken by the Government to rehabilitate them ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU) : (a) As on 31st December, 1996 26,142 ex-Servicemen were registered for employment with the Zila Sainik Boards in Kerala.

- (b) Government have taken various steps to provide gainful employment opportunities to the ex-Servicemen. These, inter alia, comprise reservation of posts in the